

Dealing With Today's

Asymmetric Threat

to U.S. and Global Security



The Need for an
Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy

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It does not necessarily reflect the views of CACI, NDU, or their officers and employees.

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An Executive Summary of the May 8th 2008 Symposium

Government and non-government institutions, including industry, must strengthen existing partnerships to develop a comprehensive and unified grand national security strategy to proactively address the increasingly ominous asymmetric threat to U.S. and global security.

Following the end of World War II, through the four decades of the Cold War, the U.S. government adopted a fairly consistent series of national security strategies to counter the relatively uniform and traditionally staid communist threats of that era. Likewise, during the nearly 12-year interregnum between the end of the Cold War and September 11, 2001, U.S. national strategies remained relatively unchanged as the world adjusted to having a single superpower and, for the most part, witnessed only relatively minor international conflicts.

With the attack on the United States on 9/11, however, the post-Cold War era changed markedly, as a new, lethal, and asymmetrical threat to the West entered the world stage. This terrorist threat, grown on a foundation of instability and religious extremism, has capably and creatively leveraged technology, strategic communications, and divergent Western policies and priorities to enhance both its credibility and efficacy. As a result, the U.S. must rethink the policies, structures, and processes that have guided its national security strategy for the past 60 years.

This paper is designed to stimulate a dialogue on what this new strategy ought to be. It builds upon the ideas presented in a May 2008 symposium, “Dealing with Today’s Asymmetric Threat to U.S. and Global Security,” co-sponsored by the National Defense University (NDU) and CACI International Inc (CACI). The NDU-CACI symposium focused on four major functional areas of responsibility integral to a new asymmetric threat response paradigm: ***Global Diplomacy, Strategic Communications, Securing the Homeland, and Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism and Extremism***. The symposium recognized that a successful response to the broad nature and versatility of the threat will require a “whole government” approach that leverages partnerships with diverse non-government actors and yields a wide range of disciplines, including communications, law enforcement, business, and academia. Military capabilities must be coupled with “soft power.” This approach and more will be needed for long-term success against current and emergent asymmetric threats.

What Are the Current and Future Threats to U.S. Security?

During the Cold War, Western leaders developed a shared consensus on a strategy of deterrence and containment. From that consensus came strength. ***Today, U.S. security objectives are challenged by multiple states that have strengthened their economies, enhanced their militaries, and gained increased credibility.*** Rather than dominating, we now compete globally with multiple powers. While America debates the merits of international engagement and nation-building, others have dedicated themselves to securing global influence and key resources across the globe – a strategy that has been described as “economic colonialism.” Countries we view as rogue states now enjoy diplomatic, economic, and strategic lifelines from these competing powers.

Nuclear weapons development by Iran and North Korea threatens a new round of destabilizing proliferation. Instability in Pakistan and other potential nuclear states could result in the loss of control of fissile material and technology, providing rising powers and non-state actors increasing parity and the ability to assert local and regional hegemony. The world also faces a

pervasive, non-state, non-government set of adversaries, including radicals such as Al Qaida, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Organized crime groups, such as the Lebanese and Hong Kong Mafias, and crime syndicates from Central America and Mexico, to Nigeria to Russia and Taiwan, also threaten our security. Across the globe, these and other non-state actors have been effective in their asymmetric developments, processes, and actions.

Adding to this mix, 20 new cities exceeding one million people are projected in the next five years, mostly in the Third World, and all are incubators for discontent and contributors to instability. Adversaries like Hamas and Hezbollah have learned



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to leverage this discontent through well-established social support structures. The foundation of their strength is not merely military power, but is instead in providing such services to populations suffering under the corruption and incompetence of national governments that are unable or unwilling to provide a satisfactory quality of life.

Failed and failing states increase this threat by harboring terrorists and supporting international crime and human rights abuses. In 1996, the World Bank categorized 11 nations as failed states. By 2006 there were more than 25, and many others in a “failing” status. Terrorists and criminals, working with failing state leaders, operate at the seams of international law to avoid detection.

The scarcity of resources – water, food, and energy – has the power to make a debilitating mark on the world, for such scarcities breed instability. We must address scarcity issues, as well as environmental and economic factors, to begin to “win the hearts and minds” of youth in order to prevent future instability. Our strategy must focus on people, urban population centers, cultures, and societies to convince these populations that they can achieve their aspirations through peaceful interaction, open markets, education, security, effective governance, and with U.S. help and encouragement.



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At the same time, U.S. and other Western democracies must begin to compete economically against Islamic financial structures that are redistributing the world’s wealth, as well as against an appealing authoritarian model of development promoted by China and others. Likewise, our businesses must compete effectively in the non-traditional marketplace of the developing world. Our approach must be less about foreign aid than our support for international approaches, debt management, and private sector solutions. We must be alert and able to combat finance vehicles that contribute to adversaries, criminals, and terrorists. Our solutions must capture and integrate all national capabilities to combat asymmetric threats.

Where Are U.S. Capabilities and Weaknesses?

During the last half of the twentieth century, the prevailing security reality was Western reliance on U.S. strength, with a common heritage and values undergirding that trust. But even before the end of the Cold War, reliance on our protection waned, as did confidence in our ability to protect. This perception has been compounded by new enemies with the ability to mount credible attacks against the West and the inability of the U.S. to bring these enemies to their knees. ***Our perceived inability to counter threats and protect allies and partners has weakened those partnerships.***



CIA World Factbook

In 2002, our long-standing foreign policy, built on a foundation of alliances and international dialogue, shifted. The new U.S. doctrine of preemption, military primacy, a “new multilateralism,” and the spread of democracy¹ was sometimes viewed with suspicion by our historic allies, often seen not as multilateral but unilateral. We also faced reduced credibility because of U.S. pronouncements that were sometimes inaccurate or based on faulty information. Furthermore, the war in Iraq has proven to be a divisive issue among the American people and our traditional allies, leading to a loss of focus on the clear threat terrorism poses. The task of rebuilding international trust and credibility will therefore be multifaceted and challenging, and require consistency over time.

At the same time, the U.S. economy is strained. Our federal debt has grown by 63 percent since the 9/11 attacks and the value of the U.S. dollar has declined. Rising oil prices are causing an enormous transfer of wealth and power to petro-authoritarian regimes and shifting influence away from the U.S. Our national response to the global economic challenge has been inadequate. As long as

¹ Keir A. Lieber and Robert J. Lieber, “The Bush National Security Strategy,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda, Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State*, Vol. 7, No. 4, December 2002, <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1202/ijpe/pj7-4lieber.htm>.

we are not directly attacked, challenges within our economy will lead to an inevitable decline in discretionary spending, including defense and security-related spending.

Ideas need to be translated into resources and actions to meet the national security needs of this century. Those needs will not be met with a 60-year-old national security framework. For the most part, ideas under consideration are not adequate to meet these challenges; they are only working the margins of what exists now. We need to restructure, flatten organizations, break stovepipes, and streamline processes.

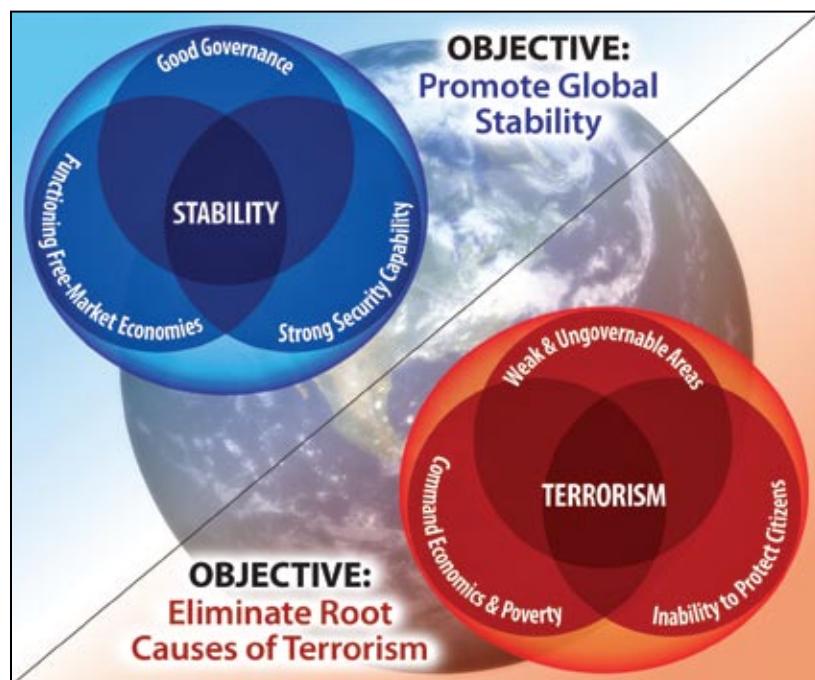
The upcoming change in government is in itself an opportunity for bolder security initiatives. The new security environment provides us the opportunity to create a security system that is effective against the long-term threat and consistent with our values as a nation. American resources are immense, and our potential is even greater. Our problem is not resources, but rather their allocation. To maximize our ability to act will require the combination of a reallocation of resources among the agencies of government, plus dynamic leadership.

What Should an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy Contain?

An Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy must ensure that the right balance is achieved between and among the elements of soft and kinetic power. Furthermore, the three branches of government must be congruous in terms of recognizing the threat, addressing consistency of behavior across political administrations, and reinforcing with the American people, throughout a long period of persistent conflict, the principles of liberty and individual rights embedded in the U.S. Constitution.

Although our federal, state, and local governments have made considerable headway in the area of national security, what is sorely needed is a long-term strategy involving the U.S. government, industry, academia, and foreign partners aimed not only at diffusing short-term threats, but also in preventing long-term challenges.

Global order and disorder are two sides of the same coin. Governments and cultures strive to sustain and promote their cultures through governance, security, and economics. At the convergence of the positive side of these three concepts resides local, regional, and global stability. As can be seen in so many places in the world, when these three elements are deficient, a hospitable climate for violence and terrorism emerges.



Graphic by Stan Poczatek

For the past several years, we have focused on identifying and combating terrorism. This may have been the correct initial response, but today a larger concept is needed – an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy that will enable us to promote long-term global stability while eliminating the root causes of terrorism.

Four critically important specific strategies should serve as the foundation of, and be nested within, a grand strategy, addressing asymmetric threats to U.S. and global security.

- **A Strategic Communications Strategy**

U.S. internal and external communications programs have been identified as a significant national weakness. In contrast, our adversaries have captured the value of communications in propagating their ideologies and intimidating their adversaries. Our National Strategic

Communications Strategy must be both defensive and offensive, counter propaganda and untruths, use current and future technologies, and promote the United States as the world leader for functioning free market economies, good governance, and strong security capabilities. And it must achieve all this while remaining sensitive to global and local requirements and aspirations.

- ***A Defense and Homeland Security Strategy***

A new National Defense and Homeland Security Strategy must address a wide range of threats, from terrorism and Islamic extremism to pandemic disease and natural disasters. Such a strategy, within the U.S., must include and integrate the capabilities at local, state, and national levels, and these capabilities must be made effective and efficient. Outside the U.S., defeating asymmetric threats will require the integrated engagement of both international and national power, and for all security professionals to coalesce around a set of common terms, concepts, strategies, tactics, and operational methods.

- ***An Economic Strategy***

U.S. economic strategy should postulate economic realities and goals over the next century and serve as the basis for a plan that will lead to long-term stability, economic growth, and global economic leadership. Our economic security strategy will require changes and trade-offs in our priorities. Our policies must tread a careful path through free and open market competition, protection and promotion of domestic commercial interests, and enhancement of global market economies that will grow to become future competitors. We must balance competing and sometimes contradictory economic philosophies in order to fight world terror through an economic strategy whose principal objective is building a more stable world. Only a comprehensive National Economic Strategy can guide us through these issues effectively.

- ***A Diplomatic (International) Strategy***

The traditional U.S. diplomatic model, based on the preeminence of an ambassador with a direct line of authority to the President, should change to enhance ambassadorial coordination, better integrate diplomatic approaches, and achieve regional, rather than potentially sub-optimized state objectives. This new National Diplomatic Strategy should be based on a regional design accepted by all U.S. government agencies. The U.S. Department of State (DoS) should lead the regional interagency effort with professional diplomats, selected for their expertise in statecraft and political acumen, rather than for their political party affiliation. Concurrently, the U.S. must convince our allies and international partners of both the value and necessity of unified approaches to counter asymmetric threats, including how to deal with the issue of “revolution through participation,” illustrated by the “democratic electoral victory” of Hamas in Palestine.

Besides these four key elements, our national approach to dealing with asymmetric threats should include strategies for health, education, emergency response, resource sharing, and nation-building to counter and correct the trend of failing states. The cultures, religions, and ideals in the nations we hope to assist may differ, but the end goal is the same – stable nation-states with the political, economic, social, and security institutions able to provide their people with security, food, clean water, education, prosperity, and hope for the future.



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How Do We Find the Way Forward?

To develop a truly integrated national strategy dealing with asymmetric threats, the U.S. government, industry, and academia must focus attention on three fundamental targets: the National Security Strategy of the United States, our organization for national security, and a process to make the important changes that our nation needs.

With the coming of a new presidential administration and momentum towards greater consensus, the opportunity exists to suggest the framework of a new strategy to best meet our security requirements. The next Asymmetric Threat Symposium will explore what such a strategy ought to contain and how the U.S. government must be organized to meet its national security requirements. We will discuss not just the ends and ways of the strategy, but also the means. It will be necessary for the U.S. to determine how it can realistically move from its current strategy and structure to a future model, the process of which may prove to be the most difficult challenge of all.

What's Next?

These ideas, generated by the participants at the NDU-CACI symposium, offer important context for the next administration, Congress, and other key leaders to begin to develop a new, decades-long approach to national security. To assist in this process, NDU and CACI will continue our efforts in the coming months by taking a closer look at a truly Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy. We will do this through seminars and discussions on the following key topics:

- The evolution of soft and hard power;
- Shifts in global behavior;
- Competition for declining resources; and
- Other emergent threats.

By doing so, we hope to inform and contribute to a dialogue that will help our nation reach agreement on a new national security paradigm, one that will reflect the increasingly asymmetric nature of future threats to U.S. security, foster a deeper understanding of our current and potential weaknesses, and reveal opportunities to achieve a more secure future for the American people and the world.



1 Introduction

To best meet today's asymmetric threat to U.S. and global security, government and industry should partner to develop a comprehensive and unified national strategy.

On May 8, 2008, the National Defense University (NDU) and CACI International Inc (CACI) co-sponsored a symposium on “Dealing with Today’s Asymmetric Threats to U.S. and Global Security” (the Asymmetric Threat Symposium). Through this symposium, NDU and CACI sought to expand the dialogue between government, industry, academia, and foreign representatives, and foster the creation of an Integrated National Strategy to combat global asymmetric threats.

The Asymmetric Threat Symposium focused on four major functional areas of responsibility that NDU and CACI leaders believed would be integral to a global and national asymmetric threat response paradigm. Together, these areas would unite all relevant departments of government and other national resources, where appropriate, to build a consensus on a national strategy to address and defeat such asymmetrical threats. The four major areas on which the symposium focused were ***Global Diplomacy, Strategic Communications, Securing the Homeland, and Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism and Extremism.***

The symposium sought a broader, yet in-depth, understanding of the scope and complexity of these diverse challenges and how the U.S. must deal with them. This response would be based upon a formulation of national policies and strategies that address diplomatic and military responses and synergies, social and cultural initiatives to bolster the understanding and will of the American people, and other programs to directly counter the terrorist and extremist threats faced by the U.S. and our foreign partners. These policies and strategies implemented at the national level must be integrated and synchronized, considering the application of all elements of our national resources and power, including:

- Military capabilities;
- Economic capabilities;
- Diplomatic and political capabilities;
- Information and communications capabilities;
- Intelligence Community capabilities;
- Law enforcement capabilities;
- Legal frameworks;
- Scientific development;
- Educational and cultural resources; and
- All other branches of U.S. and local government.



The symposium recognized that asymmetrical threats are not uniquely military, but require the engagement of all elements of national power, including that applied by Congress, the judiciary, and the executive branch, as well as the private sector. Leaders in all sectors must work together if we are to be successful against a dedicated, capable, and multi-faceted threat.

This paper seeks to capture and reflect upon the ideas raised by the expert panelists and diverse attendees at the Asymmetric Threat Symposium, and thereby inspire current and future leaders to work together in developing a long-term vision and creative construct for addressing the asymmetric threat well into the future. The symposium panelists and speakers focused the majority of their discussions around issues related to terrorism and Islamic extremism; however, there are myriad asymmetric threats to U.S. and global security that must be examined further in developing a truly Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy.

Figure 1 highlights the dangers that threaten our way of life – terrorism and nation-state aggression; economic decline and

diminished U.S. credibility around the world; narco-terrorism and drug trafficking; nuclear proliferation; pandemic disease; insufficient natural, medical, and energy resources to meet world demand; and unpredictable actions of the disenfranchised and disadvantaged who may be swayed to support anti-Western (particularly anti-American) and anti-democratic agendas.



Graphic by Stan Poczatek

Figure 1. Multiple complex elements must be considered in the development of an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy.

A new Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy response plan must incorporate this multitude of potential threats and remain flexible so that we may defend ourselves, our country, and our allies against future potential threats. There is consensus that asymmetric threats, including acts of terrorism, will be a prominent feature of the threat environment that the U.S. and our allies will face for at least the next several decades. (See Appendix A for an explanation of asymmetric threats.)

Recommendations from the symposium, this paper, and future symposia must involve the wide array of national assets and resources – in government and in the intelligence, counterterrorism, and law enforcement communities at large – to cover these diverse threats. To aid in developing a framework for the Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy, this paper focuses on the ideas presented at the Asymmetric Threat Symposium, which highlight the current and future threats related to counterterrorism and Islamic extremism. Accordingly, the paper is organized into two segments:

- **The Security Environment** explores current and future threats to our security, capabilities, and weaknesses of the U.S., and opportunities.
- **The Way Forward** offers proposed next steps to aid U.S. leadership in implementing strategy, structural change, and reform.

Ultimately, NDU and CACI hope that readers will reflect upon the key concepts raised in the symposium and use them as catalysts to consider strategies to defeat and/or mitigate the risks posed by other asymmetric threats and encourage our national leaders to develop, organize, and implement an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy and measure its potential for success in defeating asymmetric threats.²

2 The Security Environment

2.1 Current and Future Threats

During the four-plus decades of the Cold War, U.S. political parties developed a shared consensus as to the Cold War threat, its extent, and the broad-based strategy of deterrence that ultimately prevailed without direct superpower-to-superpower engagement. In addition, most political and military leaders subscribed to a consistent paradigm of containment over this period.

As a result, there was general agreement on U.S. National Security Strategy, the basic structure and weapons systems required by the military, the requirement for a sizable active and reserve force, and the provision of resources adequate to meet a clearly understood threat. There was also a broad understanding of the roles of various government departments and agencies and how their efforts would work together to sustain the U.S. response to the threat. This ensured consistency and continuity of support over time as government leadership changed.

Apart from the clear advantages in preserving U.S. national security, our country realized an additional side benefit from this national strategy in which we saw:

- Unity of effort and commitment;
- Constancy of behavior; and
- Steadfastness of the U.S. as we faced a formidable threat.

These factors do not exist today, in a world where the threat to our way of life may be even more dangerous than that faced in the Cold War. The growing asymmetric threats are dramatically different from those of the twentieth century. Our adversaries and enemies today are not like the totalitarian communists of the Soviet Union or the politico-military dictatorships of Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and fascist Italy in World War II. In fact, very little about our current threat environment compares

2 Passages adapted from NDU briefing and Jack London's welcome remarks, NDU-CACI symposium.

to the Cold War. While we should expect a protracted conflict, a multi-generational struggle – often termed the “Long War” – nothing about today’s asymmetric threat profile is as monolithic or reliably predictable and consistent as faced in the Cold War.

Before our political and military leaders can begin to formulate a grand strategy to meet today’s asymmetric threats, they need to gain a broader understanding of current and future threats to U.S. national security, including key issues centering upon states, non-states, ideas, and resources.³

2.1.1 States

The U.S. has perceived our position as the preeminent global power since the end of the Cold War – but that status is unclear today as the perception of our own vulnerabilities and image of relative invulnerability among outside observers has changed since 9/11. We now live in a world where first- and second-world countries are strengthening their economies, gaining increasing credibility worldwide, and enhancing their military capabilities.

At the same time, the U.S. is experiencing an economic slowdown and diminished political and economic influence with nations around the globe. And it has a military stretched thin by our protracted efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. One could argue that the perceived economic decline seen in the value of world currencies alone serves as a reminder of the role of economic asymmetry in defining the national power of states.

Today, rather than dominating, we compete in a geopolitical marketplace along with what are, or may well become, the world’s other superpowers – the European Union (EU) and China. The new “Big Three” make their own rules without any one of them dominating. The other key players, like India and the Islamic World, are left to choose sides in this “post-American” world.⁴

While America has had difficulty in nation-building, Europe has spent its money and political capital on securing influence in peripheral countries. Many of the poorer regions of the world have realized that they seek the European dream, not the American dream. For example, Africa wants a real “African Union” like the EU; the U.S. offers no equivalent. Activists in the Middle East prefer the EU’s parliamentary democracy, the most widely practiced form of democracy around the world, rather than the American style of tripartite separation of powers.⁵



In the East, China is reasserting itself in a strategic sense akin to that of its great imperial past.⁶ Not distracted by the Middle Eastern disturbances that preoccupy the U.S., China has cultivated key resource and investment initiatives across the globe, including with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere – Canada, Cuba, and Venezuela. In Africa, China is securing strategic mineral and energy supplies and making major strategic investments in the financial sector. It is also exporting weapons at a rate reminiscent of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Every country in the world that the U.S. currently considers a rogue state now enjoys a diplomatic, economic, or strategic lifeline from China – Iran being the most prominent example.⁷

Our potential enemies have also evolved, challenging our capabilities and commanding a new approach to defeating them.⁸ In the case of Iran and North Korea, the potential development and use of nuclear weapons remains a critical asymmetric threat to the U.S.

We have seen Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad repeatedly declare his intention to have a nuclear capability, and have it soon. While we may not be able to stop Iran from developing these nuclear capabilities, our government and the American people must fully understand the crippling effects Iran’s expanded powers could have on the political and economic stability of the Middle East. Furthermore, the impact of this threat on maritime activities, including the flow of energy resources from the Middle East and the arms race that may ensue in that region, would likely create world economic instability. If the

³ London, op. cit.

⁴ Parag Khanna, “Waving Goodbye to Hegemony,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2008.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Montgomery Meigs, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

⁷ Khanna, op. cit.

⁸ James Pavitt, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

situation devolves to military conflict with Iran, we need to be prepared for Iran to mobilize its worldwide clandestine network and engage in widespread and persistent acts of sabotage, terrorism, and subversion.

There are other asymmetric threats and irregular, unconventional strategies and forces emerging around the world as well, such as North Korea's support of a Syrian nuclear capability. We must also be mindful of threats emerging from Africa, in Sudan and Somalia for example, and from countries in South America, such as Venezuela. On a different level, major challenges face us in Pakistan with potential government instability, where weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities could fall into terrorist hands, or more likely, the government of Pakistan could become dominated by Islamists, resulting in a rogue nation with a sizeable inventory of nuclear weapons. Our view of the future, including heavy weaponry and strategic interests, must also consider both Russia and India and their respective roles in defending the world of the future.⁹

In his book, *The Post-American World*, Fareed Zakaria, the editor of *Newsweek International*, proposes that while the U.S. still has many unique assets, “the rise of the rest” – the Chinas, Indias, Brazils, and even smaller non-state actors – is creating a world where many other countries are moving up to America’s level of economic clout and self-assertion, in every realm.¹⁰ As nations continue to vie for global positioning, the role of nation-states may become less defined and non-state actors will present an even greater threat.

In his book, *Superclass*, David Rothkopf argues that on many of the most critical issues of our time, the influence of all nation-states is waning, the system for addressing global issues among nation-states is more ineffective than ever, and a power void is emerging. This void is now being filled by a small group of players, which he refers to as “the superclass” – a new global elite, who are much better suited to operating on the global stage and influencing global outcomes than the vast majority of national political leaders.¹¹

Some of this new elite are from business and finance, says Rothkopf. While others are members of “a kind of shadow elite – criminals and terrorists. Some are masters of new or traditional media, some are religious leaders, and a few are top officials of those governments that do have the ability to project their influence globally.”¹²

There are two important facts that seem to be emerging in this dynamic: nation-states in the developing world are having an increasingly hard time fulfilling the expectations of the citizens of those states, and the international system is undergoing the same type of lawless evolution that most states go through before a voluntary federation capable of managing the challenges discussed here emerges. This crisis of instability and lack of control is compounded by the absence of a global strategy to combat the asymmetric threats that the U.S. and other major players face.

2.1.2 Non-States

The world has undergone and is undergoing enormous economic, demographic, and political change as a result of globalization. One result of this is that we now face a ubiquitous, non-state, non-government set of adversaries, such as Egypt’s Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) and Al-Jihad (Islamic Jihad), Al Qaida, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and Abu Sayyef in the Philippines.

Some of the earlier cases of Islamist extremism began in Egypt in the 1960s and Iran in the late 1970s, and terrorism continues today in the Middle East and around the world.¹³ We are also threatened by numerous organized crime groups, such as the Lebanese and Hong Kong Mafias, and crime syndicates from Chile, China, Colombia, Ghana, Libya, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan,

As nations continue to vie for global positioning, the role of nation-states may become less defined and non-state actors will present an even greater threat ... The system for addressing global issues among nation-states is ineffective and creating a global power void.

9 London, op. cit.

10 Thomas Friedman, “Imbalances of Power,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2008.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 London, op. cit.



NASA/GSFC/Visualization Analysis Laboratory

Korea, Lebanon, Nigeria, Russia, and Taiwan currently functioning at will in the Tri-Border area of South America.¹⁴ These movements have been quite effective in their asymmetric threats, processes, and actions.

Advancements over the past 20 years have made it easier for terrorists, insurgents, criminals, hackers, and other non-state adversaries to execute despicable acts on a larger scale than we could have ever imagined prior to 9/11. This is primarily due to the fact that the size and number of human targets has increased as more people are living in cities; terrorists have greater access to develop and use powerful explosives, “dirty” materials, biotechnology, computer hacking technology, and the like; and worldwide communications methods, such as global television networks and the Internet, spread the results of their acts more quickly and broadly than ever.

There are a number of growth-related issues that multiply the ability of these non-state actors to be more dangerous today than ever before. There are projected to be 20 new cities that exceed one million people in the next

five years. All of them are in the Third World or China, and all of them are breeding grounds for discontent over the current state of affairs in their host countries. At the same time, access to the Internet is growing more rapidly in the Third World than anywhere else. Furthermore, the international banking system is unable to cope with the growth of financial instruments available to the newly organized institutions seeking funding for their programs (good or bad).

While we have been successful in marrying human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), satellites, and the Internet – all enabled by geospatial information and other technologies, sources, and methods – to capture, kill, and detain terrorists that aim to do harm to the U.S. and our interests abroad, Al Qaida has remained resilient. Even with numerous leaders dead or arrested, their violent jihad ideology has gained popularity around the world and must be combated centrally as part of our asymmetric threat response paradigm.¹⁵ We have to be patient and use the full range of our nation’s authorities, resources, and capabilities, fully integrated, to hit this enemy hard in all functional areas and defeat him. In addition, by engaging and aligning with authoritative Muslim scholars, the U.S. may be able to encourage more moderate leaders to refute the Islamist ideology publicly and begin spreading a message of non-violence.¹⁶

However, even if everything goes “right,” this war against a non-state, terrorist enemy will be decades long.¹⁷ We need to keep pressure on the terrorists, ensuring they never feel safe. We must know where they are and where we think they will go if forced to move. We must work with our friends and partners in the Muslim world to ensure today’s five-year-olds hear a moderate message and do not become 15-year-olds wearing suicide vests.¹⁸

We also need to change the historical paradigm in which the U.S. previously fought state adversaries. Non-military, “soft” means, such as infrastructure support, humanitarian aid, education, etc., may help us beat these current threats.¹⁹



U.S. Department of Defense

¹⁴ Rex Hudson, “Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) Of South America,” Report prepared by the Library of Congress, Federal Research Division under Interagency Agreement with the United States Government, July 2003.

¹⁵ Jose Rodriguez, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bill Cowan, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

¹⁸ Bert Calland, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

¹⁹ Pavitt, op. cit.

Dealing With Today's Asymmetric Threat to U.S. and Global Security

One reason that Hamas has been so successful in Syria, Palestine, and elsewhere in the Middle East is that it possesses a well-established social support structure.²⁰ Hezbollah, too, runs an impressive network of social services, which provides health care, small loans, and family support for the Shia community of Lebanon. The foundation of Hezbollah's strength is not just in its rockets, but in the support it can command from one million Lebanese Shiites who have been institutionally discriminated against in the country's power structures. This is why dealing with Hezbollah, or any terrorist group, solely as a military problem is counterproductive.²¹ Until we can provide equally supportive social services via the host country governments or the private sector, we are not going to be able to shut down the growth of threats in these key areas.

"Smaller, irregular forces – insurgents, guerrillas, terrorists – will find ways, as they always have, to frustrate and neutralize the advantages of larger, regular militaries. And even nation-states will try to exploit our perceived vulnerabilities in an asymmetric way, rather than play to our inherent strengths."

– Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

Another critical threat to U.S. and global security is the increasing number of failed or failing states around the world that harbor terrorists and support organized crime and drug and human smuggling.

Following the Cold War, the World Bank and other groups began to categorize what makes a state a failure. In 1996, there were 11 failed states; in 2003 there were 17; and by 2006 there were more than 25 failed states in the world. With those 25+ failed nation states, and many others in a “failing” state status, the world’s fabric continues to strain and crack in many different ways since the Cold War, e.g., with corruption and ethnic strife.²²

Failed states result from numerous challenges that are intensified by globalization. Such nation-states are unable to provide good governance and sustain the rule of law within their borders. This enables non-state actors and hostile states to attack the pillars of international order – creating failing and/or failed states, proxy states, terrorist safe havens, and ungoverned regions that endanger the lives of people around the world. In turn, this threatens U.S. national security and support for freedom and democracy, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan, where our troops and those of our allies are helping to defend freely elected governments and sovereign peoples against determined insurgents and terrorists.²³

We are seeing stateless areas and criminal states that support terrorism – Afghanistan offered training facilities and safe haven to Al Qaida, for example, and Liberia’s Charles Taylor offered Hezbollah and organized crime legitimate means to obtain diplomatic passports in exchange for money.²⁴ To combat the asymmetric threats posed by these failed and failing states, the U.S. must look at the pipelines that pass goods and services illicitly around the world. Terrorists and other criminals, working with recognized failed or failing state leaders, can commit acts within international legal rules that become very difficult to detect.

According to Newsweek’s Zakaria, “Every year, warlords, gangsters, militiamen, and terrorists kill tens of thousands of people in wars that are only sporadically reported to the outside world. They do their butchery using weapons obtained and delivered, to all sides of these conflicts, by [gray-market arms providers]. These are the real weapons of mass destruction in the post-Cold War world, taking lives and shattering communities from the slums of Baghdad to the jungles of Colombia, from the streets of Beirut to the impoverished diamond-mining hamlets of West Africa.”²⁵

With no effective international controls on buying and selling weapons and other goods with military applications, and a lack of international enforcement of laws and protocols governing illegal sales and shipment of military goods, the criminal-terrorist nexus in these areas will continue to threaten the U.S. and our allies.

20 Andrew Cochran, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

21 Fareed Zakaria, “Who’s the Real Appeaser?” *Newsweek*, May 26, 2008.

22 Douglas Farah, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

23 Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence for the Senate Armed Services Committee, February 27, 2007.

24 Farah, op. cit.

25 Douglas Farah, “War and Terror, Inc.” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2007.

2.1.3 Ideas

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaida terrorists not only attacked our homeland but reinforced a fundamental “War of Ideas” between Islamist extremism and Western democracy that began decades ago. We now find ourselves with an enemy whose strategy, ideology, and doctrine are neither completely understood by our leaders nor effectively communicated to the American people.²⁶

Moreover, as time has passed since 2001 and Americans have lost interest in fighting the Global War on Terror, our enemy’s propaganda machine has gained so much credibility and believability that many Muslims believe that Arabs were not responsible for carrying out the 9/11 attacks. Our leaders at every level of government must recognize that winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim world is one of the “centers of gravity” in the struggle against violent extremists.²⁷ If we are to be successful in defeating this enemy, we must gain an understanding of their ideologies and counter them strategically.

First, we must understand ourselves, our enemy, and our audience. Americans tend to think in the short-term (e.g., one to two months), whereas our Islamist extremist enemies think in terms of achieving a “better world” and will not stop in any set timeframe.²⁸ We value technology and speed, rather than time and determination. We think in terms of decisive battles, but the enemy wants to draw us into protracted confrontation. We value physical defeat, but ideological defeat is of the utmost importance to the enemy. Muslims represent one-fifth of the world’s population and their growth rate exceeds that of rest of the world by 56 percent. Some have referred to the effects of this growth as an “Islamic Renaissance” whose impact on the developed West cannot be predicted. In this environment, terrorism is used as a tactic – it is not the root cause.²⁹ For some Islamists, a key issue is Wahabism, the most rigid form of Islam that rejects the acceptance of other religions.³⁰

In his book, *Koranic Duels*, Judge Hamoud al-Hitar discussed his experience running a deprogramming effort in Yemeni jails for convicted Al Qaida members. He postulated that, “If you study terrorism in the world, you will see that it has an intellectual idea behind it. And any intellectual idea can be defeated by intellect.”



U.S. Department of Defense

The Islamists use a bottom-up approach to convince their followers of their totalitarian ideology, i.e., blaming the U.S. for their poverty, lack of resources, etc. This tactic is not new and has also been advocated by Western critics of the international development community. In the past, we have responded by use of both military support, e.g., foreign military financing, humanitarian assistance, the World Bank, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Our future responses must match the current opposition’s social services, but also focus on people in cities and urban population centers, supporting these people, accepting their cultures, and helping to reconstruct their societies. We must begin convincing Muslims that our “product” is better than our “competitor’s” product.³¹

If we can help to shape their definitions of concepts like “freedom,” “justice,” and the like, communicate them with credibility, and act consistently with such concepts, the U.S. will win this war of ideas.

26 Walid Phares, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

27 Steven Monblatt, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

28 Zeyno Baran, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

29 Anthony Zinni, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

30 Baran, op. cit.

31 Zinni, op. cit.; Baran, op. cit.

2.1.4 Resources

A key issue in stabilizing any developing community is the delivery of major services to the population, such as water, electricity, housing, job opportunities, and health.³² The scarcity of such resources – water, food, and energy – also has the power to make a debilitating mark on the world, leading to hunger, poverty, and despair, and ultimately to terror and war.³³ We are already seeing shifts throughout the world related to these three key elements. The following are just a few examples:

- **Water** – Due to drought conditions in Spain, the city of Barcelona is importing water from France.
- **Food** – The World Bank and United Nations have been reporting food shortages throughout the world.
- **Energy** – Russia is using oil and gas as an intimidation lever on the Ukraine and Georgia, and soon may be taking the same approach in Germany, based on current agreements.

The Russians, and others with similar capabilities, realize that they do not need to use missiles when they can get what they want simply by turning the lights off and holding up the transfer of energy.³⁴ The U.S. must address these scarcity issues in its grand strategy, as well as in environmental and economic policies, to avoid further instability in the future. We need to think through what it takes to get economic stability and quality of life and tap into what is most important for people.³⁵ By doing so, we may begin to win the hearts and minds of Arab, Asian, and Persian youth, and regain our national will.³⁶



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In the meantime, the U.S. must also deal with the realities of terrorism and the asymmetric threats related to nuclear weapons. Given fissile material, a state or non-state actor possessing a reasonable industrial capability could fabricate a low-yield weapon. This reality means that the more challenging task of restricting proliferation of fissile material is at least as critical as restricting access to actual nuclear warheads.³⁷ Halting the proliferation of WMD and fissile material should be major priorities for the next administration and be incorporated into the new Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy.³⁸

In addition, Islamic finance structures are growing, redistributing the world's wealth and economic power. In order to regain our status and compete with the Islamic world, the U.S. and the Western World must do business in the Middle East. To be able to help these countries build their infrastructures, and also to avoid shutting out U.S. businesses, it is critically important that the U.S. start thinking about entering this non-traditional marketplace.³⁹ Other industrialized nations, such as Japan, Korea, and Great Britain, are already working in the Middle East and, in some cases, accepting Islamic financing. While this model is different for us, we must look at it as a good move from a trade perspective, with a potential side benefit of creating U.S. jobs.⁴⁰ These issues focus less on increasing the amount of dollars the U.S. provides developing countries, and more on the way we support institutional approaches to debt management such as the Paris Club agreements, sovereign wealth funds, or the way we support private sector solutions to the three issues discussed above, through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA), and the World Bank.

However, there is growing concern within the U.S. Department of Treasury and elsewhere that Islamic financing vehicles are contributing a portion of funds to other groups that are intent on using radical Islamist approaches and enabling the gradual

³² From Final Way Forward document.

³³ David Stone, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Zinni, op. cit.

³⁶ Calland, op. cit., Rodriguez, op. cit.

³⁷ Meigs, op. cit.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jeffrey Miller, NDU-CACI symposium comments.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

subversion of Western culture. Therefore, the U.S. must be attentive to sources of Islamist financing in order to establish whether they contribute, directly or indirectly, to money laundering, terrorist financing, or the enforcement of strict Sharia law.⁴¹

To combat current and future asymmetric threats to our country and our allies, the U.S. must remain open to new approaches and ideas, realizing that solutions must capture and integrate the capabilities of all of our national assets and that investment in infrastructure and business today may be a key to our national security moving forward.

2.2 Current and Future U.S. Capabilities/Weaknesses

During the last half of the twentieth century, America was the self-proclaimed leader of the free world. At the conclusion of the Second World War, two superpowers dwarfed the global security scene, and the prevailing security reality was Western reliance on U.S. strength. The willingness of the U.S. to apply our economic and military might, our nuclear umbrella, and our ability to deter major conflict were understood and accepted.



National Park Service

Western security during the Cold War was founded on that understanding and trust. Trust was the product of many factors. Foremost was the clear and present danger of a bellicose, nuclear-armed enemy with a stated goal of world domination. Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 declaration, "Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you."⁴² became the tagline for 45 years for Western reliance on U.S. power.

Trust was based as much on an acceptance of the effectiveness of U.S. power as it was on the reliance that power would be applied when needed for common defense. "We will bury you" was countered with the pledge to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe."⁴³ Further undergirding that trust was a general acceptance of common Western heritage and values, including the safeguarding of freedoms and the principles of democracy.⁴⁴

But even before the end of the Cold War, reliance on our protection waned, as did confidence in our ability to protect. An extended period of peace and prosperity and improved communications with an erstwhile adversary reduced the perceived need for protection. Memories of Budapest in 1956, Berlin in 1961, Prague in 1968, and of Stalin and Khrushchev were supplanted by images of the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, Gorbachev, glasnost, and perestroika. By the time the Soviet Union imploded, the need for protection had dissipated, and with it went much of the commonality of purpose on which reliance and trust had been founded.

Even with the advent of the current threat, in 2004 less than half of NATO's 26 members met the alliance benchmark of 2 percent of GDP for defense spending.⁴⁵ This perception of a lack of urgency has been compounded by new enemies with the ability to mount credible attacks, particularly against the U.S., as well as the seeming inability of the U.S. to bring these enemies to their knees.

2.2.1 Credibility

The U.S. is arguably the most powerful military force on the planet. But the potential of our power will only take us so far. For our power to be credible, it must effectively combine necessity and capability with trust.

41 Cochran, op. cit.

42 "We Will Bury You," *Time*, November 26, 1956.

43 John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961.

44 North Atlantic Treaty Preamble, April 4, 1949.

45 Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, Comparisons of U.S. and Foreign Military Spending, January 28, 2004, Figure 1, p. 17.

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Credibility is derived from the successful use of power when needed, and particularly in the ability to apply power to defeat enemies or at least constrain their freedom of action. Trust is the by-product when capability and necessity are combined with reliability and effectiveness. For the U.S., being the sole remaining superpower will have little bearing on future global security if that power fails to influence the actions of friends and foes alike.

While there is no nation in the world that can match the capabilities of the U.S. in military power, intelligence, and technology, we are facing a paradigm shift that requires us to approach the world differently. Today, our national security is arguably more challenged than at any time since the revolutionary war. However, unlike the traditional power of the British fleet that arrived in New York harbor in July 1776, today's threat is more complicated: 19 hijackers, category 5 hurricanes, the outbreak of pandemic disease, information attacks on financial markets, or perhaps even suicide bombers in Middle America.⁴⁶



Our real or perceived inability to effectively react to these threats within our own borders or spheres of influence damages our credibility to project power and to protect our allies and partners. Moreover, we lack international unity of purpose. Many, particularly in this political year, believe that the U.S. squandered the consensus and global support it had immediately after the 2001 attacks. For example, the 2008 Republican Party presidential candidate, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), recognizes that "the bonds we share with Europe ... have frayed" and has established revitalization of the transatlantic partnership as one of his top foreign policy objectives.⁴⁷ The 2008 Democratic Party presidential candidate, Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), asserts that we "dismissed European reservations ... belittled South Korean efforts [and] in Latin America we failed to adequately address concerns about immigration and equity and economic growth."⁴⁸



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/opendemocracy/1441901063/>

Our long-standing foreign policy, built on a foundation of alliances and international dialogue, shifted. The 2002 National Security Strategy declared that "the only path to peace and security is the path of action" and that the U.S. would when necessary "act preemptively."⁴⁹ This doctrine of preemption, military primacy, new multilateralism, and the spread of democracy was predicated on an unprecedented threat, the inadequacy of Cold War containment and deterrence, and the inability of international organizations, particularly the UN and EU, to act with urgency and effectiveness. Deference was given to temporary alliances – coalitions of the willing where only the U.S. had the capacity to lead.⁵⁰

Our historic allies viewed this shift first with suspicion, and soon thereafter with outright rejection. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was seen as part of a U.S. shift toward unilateral approaches signaled by decisions such as the rejection of the Kyoto global climate accord and the International Criminal Court, all at odds with European multilateral preferences.⁵¹

Today, these elements have progressed to a state where U.S. credibility is strained and world trust has been degraded.⁵² Our Cold War foreign policy was dependent on principled and predictable American action on the world stage, actions that nurtured alliances with traditional allies and international institutions.^{53,54} Going to war without the consensus and support of our traditional allies has exacted a significant price.

46 Meigs, op. cit.

47 John McCain, "An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007.

48 Barack Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007.

49 National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002, p.6.

50 Robert J. Lieber, *The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

51 Esther Brimmer, "Seeing Blue, American Visions of the European Union," Chailot Paper #105, European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, September 2007, p.5.

52 Pavitt, op. cit.; Monblatt, op. cit.

53 Ian Shapiro, *Containment: Rebuilding a Strategy Against Global Terror* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p.31.

54 Meigs, op. cit.

Our most essential communications task is to regain the credibility we have lost. We have lost credibility because repeatedly, over a wide range of issues, government pronouncements have proven to be inaccurate or based upon faulty intelligence. Trust is the by-product of telling the truth over time.⁵⁵ The task of rebuilding international trust and our credibility will be multifaceted, challenging, and require consistency over time. The war in Iraq has so angered the American people and our traditional allies that they have lost sight of a general challenge. Frustration with war has deflected attention from the seriousness of the long-term threats and solutions. Populations in the democratic, industrialized world neither understand nor accept the concept of the long war, particularly its breadth and scope. Regaining that focus and developing understanding will require exceptional leadership.

2.2.2 The Economy

The engine that sustains U.S. national security, our economy, is strained. Our federal debt has grown by 63 percent since the 9/11 attacks, to over \$9.415 trillion.⁵⁶ Major overseas holdings of U.S. dollars give increasing powers to competitors and threaten the dollar's stability as a sovereign currency. Our currency, long the mainstay and bedrock of international commerce, is not only being challenged, but attacked. Since the beginning of the Iraq War, the dollar has lost 30 percent of its value to the euro, 19 percent to the British pound, 17 percent to the Chinese yuan, and 16 percent to the Japanese yen.



These growing economies are increasing demands on the finite quantities of petroleum produced, changing the global economic landscape. The inflation-adjusted price of a barrel of crude oil was under \$25/barrel in September 2003. The price per barrel reached \$130.05 on May 21st, 2008, a 520 percent increase. This shift represents an enormous transfer of wealth and power to petro-authoritarian regimes, everywhere from Russia to Saudi Arabia to Venezuela to Iran, and shifting influence away from the U.S.⁵⁷ While this is a major topic of discussion, steel purchased by China over the last decade has raised prices and almost shut down heavy infrastructure development in the Third World. We were very slow to react to this issue until it began to threaten military needs for special-purpose steel, such as the material required for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle program and related U.S. military projects.

Our national response to this global economic challenge has been weak. Our President travels to the Middle East to request increased oil production from the Saudi King, and others suggest a summer gas tax holiday that over 300 economists, including six winners of the Nobel Prize in Economics, have openly declared to be folly.^{58,59}

"The triumph of any one great power, or the collapse of another, has also been the consequence of the more or less efficient utilization of the state's productive economic resources in wartime, and further in the background the way that state's economy has been rising or falling relative to the other leading nations."

– Paul Kennedy

The challenge within our economy will lead to an inevitable decline in discretionary spending, including defense and security-related spending. When the Pentagon and World Trade Center were attacked and over 3,000 people died, there was an immediate infusion of capital for security; in a crisis we found the resources.⁶⁰

Seven years later those resources are about to dry up. As long as we are not directly attacked, it is a certainty that budgets for the very things we talk about will go down. Some believe that we will have the money once more only when we are attacked again. Paul Kennedy's warnings on reasons great powers decline could be prescient.⁶¹

55 Monblatt, op. cit.

56 "Debt to the Penny," U.S. Department of the Treasury, <http://www.treasurydirect.gov>.

57 Friedman, op. cit.

58 "Open Letter from Economists Opposing Gas Tax Holiday," <http://gastax08.blogspot.com/2008/05/open-letter-from-economists-opposing.html>, May 4, 2008.

59 Meigs, op. cit.

60 Pavitt, op. cit.

61 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (First Vintage Books Edition, 1989) p. xv.

2.2.3 Ideas

One does not have to look very far to realize that in this information age, tomorrow's conflicts will be wars of ideas more than contests of superior power and hardware.

That we have to win hearts and minds, hardly a novel concept, is generally accepted yet misunderstood. We have found that what we thought to be universal beliefs are hardly universal. Kinetic thinking is slowly giving way to this war of ideas, but a tendency remains to rely on overwhelming military force in the belief that it will defeat our adversaries, and more importantly, lead them to adopt our ideas. We want to believe that all wars can be viewed through – or worse, shaped into – the model of World War II, our “good war,” where we were attacked and achieved victory through a trial of strength between nation-states.

But WWII may have been an aberration, and as former NATO Deputy Commander, UK General Rupert Smith has said, “winning the trial of strength will not deliver the will of the people.”⁶² Returning young leaders, when asked what they needed that they didn’t have before departing for Iraq or Afghanistan, respond: “more cultural training and cultural intelligence.”⁶³

The idea we generated to deal with the new world we face, “The Global War on Terror,” has been strategically inadequate and has led us to solutions that are more tactical than strategic.⁶⁴ Our ideas must be as large as the problem-set we face and include not just the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but issues throughout the region, as well as climate change, radical changes in demography, instability, and what we might call the Era of Islamic Transformation. Our ideas must be large enough to recognize that this transformation has the potential to be their reformation, enlightenment, and renaissance combined – or that it has equal potential to be a new dark ages unconstrained by geography.

Today, in this war of influence and ideas, the target is populations in unstable areas. The enemy desires their fear, apathy, or support. We, on the other side, seek courage, commitment, and rejection of our enemy’s ideas.⁶⁵ In a war of ideas among the people, time and determination are far more valued than technology and hardware.⁶⁶

This concept of a war of ideas is not uniformly accepted, and to some degree is trivialized by pat phrases like “winning hearts and minds.” Perhaps what is most correct in our current dialogue is that this, in fact, is a long war, a concept that is difficult to communicate to a public led through a succession of sound-bites. What is needed is the kind of generational leadership⁶⁷ that has the moral authority to call the nation to “bear the burden of a long twilight struggle.”⁶⁸



U.S. Department of Defense

2.2.4 Actions

The National Security Act that created most of the current interagency structure was passed in 1947, and the last major legislation on the foreign aid process was passed during the Kennedy administration. Since that time, the government has attempted to improve interagency processes, planning, and cooperation incrementally. Earlier this year, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced that the Department of Defense planned to contract for an independent, non-partisan, non-profit group to study what a National Security Act for the twenty-first century should look like in terms of institutions, arrangements, and authorities.⁶⁹

⁶² Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 2007) p. 334.

⁶³ Zinni, op. cit.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Pavitt, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Kennedy, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Robert M Gates, Remarks delivered at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1211>, January 26, 2008.

Bold initiatives like these are needed. While some change has been initiated, for the most part, our ideas are too small. We need to restructure our government, flatten our organizations, break stovepipes, and streamline our processes. The change will not be easy.

Fortunately, our greatest strength may lie in recognizing our challenges, and in the ability our nation has always shown to meet those challenges. The upcoming change in government is in itself an opportunity to harness those abilities. Each of the candidates has already pledged to end the partisan polarization that has so dominated our government and hampered comprehensive action.⁷⁰ The end of a difficult election is a time of opportunity when new initiatives can be started. It is a time when the Marshalls, Kennans, and Vandenburgs of this century can be identified and empowered.

Externally, our actions need to be focused on our most enduring threat: instability. General Anthony Zinni states that instability occurs “when a society finds itself in an environment that it can’t cope with,”⁷¹ and across the globe situations are rife with instability. Our security apparatus remains designed for nation-state conflict, not instability, but this focus must change. Internally, the events of 9/11 caused us to rightly focus on security of the homeland. The threats of the modern world have caused historic tensions between domestic liberties and individual freedoms and the need to protect the homeland. The new security environment provides us the opportunity to ensure that the security systems we create are both effective and consistent with our values as a nation.

Our actions must also be economic. The resources of our nation are immense, and the potential of the nation is even greater. Our economy remains the world’s most powerful engine of productivity. Our problem is not resources, but rather their allocation.

To make the changes necessary to maximize our ability to act will require a significant reallocation of resources among government agencies, perhaps the most difficult task in Washington. It will take leadership to foster the willingness to break down bureaucratic barriers, to reach agreement on a better structure for integrated planning, and to bring all capabilities to the table, in order for the integration process to begin.



2.3 What and Where Our Opportunities Are

During the Asymmetric Threat Symposium, there was consensus that there are significant opportunities to develop an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy to address changing global threats. While there are tactical approaches for all of the U.S. government organizations, they are neither strategic nor integrated. We are “thinking too small ... and we must think BIG.”⁷² To capitalize on our opportunities, the federal government must:

- **Develop a new National Security Act** (like the National Security Act of 1947) that restructures U.S. government for the twenty-first century. This would flatten organizations, eliminate stovepipes, develop joint organizations (like Goldwater-Nichols) to counter the large threats, and create an effective and agile government by giving responsibility and authority to the lowest management level possible.⁷³
- **Establish one U.S. government strategic process** (perhaps modeled on DoD’s process) that would produce one Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy that plans for the next century. This would include a 20-year tactical plan that recognizes and deals with the issues of global economic, political, and social dependencies and inter-dependencies. This plan must seek methods and means to affect sub-regional, regional, continental, and global instabilities, whether they are economic, political, military, ideological, religious, or social. The plan should embrace globalization in a high-technology

⁷⁰ Stone op. cit.

⁷¹ Anthony Zinni, Remarks delivered at Boston College, as quoted by *The Heights*, Student Newspaper of Boston College, at <http://media.www.bcheights.com/media/storage/paper144/news/2006/10/19/News/Retired.General.Opens.Clough.Colloquium-2377205.shtml>, October 17, 2006.

⁷² Zinni, op. cit.

⁷³ Ibid.

environment. It should support the development and sustainment of stable world states and contribute to the health of the planet and the well-being of all the world's citizens.

- **Speak with “one voice” and communicate to every U.S. citizen** a description of the asymmetric threats and the objectives of the Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy. This would require renewed efforts and dialogue to inform all citizens, young and old, on international norms of morality and the characteristics that define our national identity and our culture. Our nation's educators should be challenged to develop a new civics curriculum for America's schools, one that instructs on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the structure and role of our government as it has developed, and the study of our foundational documents – the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. Such a curriculum could also incorporate descriptions of other forms of government and provide the basis for the test for prospective citizens.⁷⁴

The following sections briefly describe four sub-strategies, based on the discussions from the Asymmetric Threat Symposium. These must be integrated to develop a grand strategy to deal with asymmetric threats. These sub-strategies include Strategic Communications, Defense and Homeland Security, the Economy, and Global Diplomacy. (See Appendix B for discussions on a variety of asymmetric threats and Appendix C for an additional examination of our strategic opportunities.)

“I submit that for the first time in world history, leaders and intellectuals can reach out a century and project what the course of history will have been, given no calculated interjection into the natural order by governments, particularly superpowers. The global nature of our world, its political, economic, military, and ideological interdependencies, coupled with communications, allows this. What would Che Guevara have done in today’s environment with instant communications? What will Chavez and other “dictators” do to socialize countries and regions into totally different spheres of influence?

If this is true, there is an absolutely vital need for a grand strategy to both recognize this fact and the potential it gives the United States as a superpower to shape the world over this twenty-first century or be shaped by it.”

– LTG William Reno, USA (Ret)

2.3.1 A Strategic Communications Strategy

As discussed above, the U.S. is losing the Strategic Communications war.

America's communication programs are a significant national weakness. The Islamist extremists have clearly captured the value of communications in propagating their ideology and intimidating their adversaries. They are using communications as a weapons system in undermining the will of their targets and promoting the religious ideology they espouse. The West, in part because of freedom of expression and religion, has not found effective means to cope with or counter this threat. To do so requires a Strategic Communications Plan that:



- **Is both defensive and offensive**, telling America's story internally and externally;
- **Effectively counters propaganda** and untruths;
- **Promotes the U.S. as the inspirational world leader** in promoting freedom, the rights of the individual, and a government that understands that all men are created equal and have the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;
- **Uses current and future communication technologies** to convey our messages – the Internet has given people the opportunity to communicate instantly, and we must understand and leverage the power of this global medium both offensively and defensively; and
- **Responds to global, national, state, and local requirements and aspirations.**

74 Monblatt, op. cit.

Such a strategic approach must address the private sector's ability to influence behaviors and beliefs inside and outside the U.S. It must address the deleterious as well as the positive effects of statements from all leaders. Public figures in both the political arena and private sectors need to understand that in the world of You-Tube and digital recorders, there is no longer any distinction between local and worldwide audiences. Equally, anyone with a cell phone or digital camera is now a citizen journalist.⁷⁵ U.S. leaders must recognize and adapt to the fact that our freedom of speech and political statements feed extremists' propaganda that is used to undermine the U.S. and its Western traditions and values.⁷⁶ Yet such leaders must stand firm with the tenets of our Constitution and its guarantees of freedom of speech and expression while adapting to this reality.

The National Strategic Communications Strategy must respond to the global, national, state, and local requirements and aspirations. Our symposium speakers illustrated the fact that "one tactical action or missed action can destroy the entire communication plan."⁷⁷

2.3.2 A Defense and Homeland Security Strategy

In the global war on terrorism, the U.S. and Europe are part of the battlefield.

Asymmetric threats are not military alone and require the integrated engagement of all elements of international and national power to deal with them effectively. It is, therefore, imperative for national homeland security planners, military strategists, doctrinal experts, and scholars to coalesce around a set of common terms, concepts, strategies, tactics, and operational methods to combat these threats successfully. The environment now faced by the West and much of the developed world is one in which the threat profile is using asymmetric threat principles to undermine the rule of law in target nations, substitute religious beliefs, and subvert their cultures. A Defense and Homeland Security Strategy must involve:



- **The synchronized treatment of the threat as both** a law enforcement issue (arrest them and bring them to justice) and a national security issue (address root causes, preempt when appropriate, apply military when necessary) featuring the integrated application of all of the tools, techniques, and resources of each domain (the debate about terrorism often revolves around whether it is a criminal issue or a national security issue ... in truth, it is both).
- **Acceleration of the type of collaboration and sharing** – of data, information, knowledge, and expertise – mandated by the various commissions (9/11, WMD) and codified in law across a national security community functioning as an enterprise (system-of-systems) ... (not just "intelligence" sharing but the sharing of operational, security, investigative, policy, and observational data at the tactical/local through strategic/national levels).
- **A strategy for enterprise vulnerability reduction** (government, industry, public institutions, academia, partners...) particularly in the critical infrastructure and cyber protection areas.
- **Responding to our adversaries with a common voice and approach.** Some believe it was a missed opportunity for the U.S. government not to respond to former Iranian President Khatami's dialogue initiatives, or to President Ahmedinejad's letter to President Bush. A response from the U.S. President might have spoken directly to the Iranian people and candidly set out both what we want from their government, and what we would offer in return.⁷⁸
- **Creating a credible and widely accepted counter-narrative to our enemies**, which must come from within the Muslim community, through clerics, women's movements, and the like. The counter-narrative must be consistent with Muslim culture and traditions to be effective.⁷⁹
- **Helping the government of failed or failing states to rebuild** – we will not win the war on terrorism by killing terrorists alone. The new government must provide effective political, economic, social, and security institutions, grounded

⁷⁵ Monblatt, op. cit.

⁷⁶ Calland, op. cit.

⁷⁷ Meigs, op. cit.

⁷⁸ Monblatt, op. cit.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

in internationally accepted rules of law.^{80,81} This requirement to begin rebuilding the nation on day one of the tactical operation is critical. The notion of stabilization operations being conducted simultaneously with combat operations, not sequentially (i.e., Phase IV) – but beginning when the “first boot crosses the line”⁸² – was and is an exceptionally important concept that needs to be woven into the national strategy, as well as into DoD’s strategic planning and thinking.

The concept of simultaneity is not reflected in today’s deliberate planning process, and stabilization resources are not reflected in the Time-Phased-Force and Deployment Data (TPFDDs). In the future, our Defense and Homeland Security Strategy should make sure that forces operating at the strategic and operational levels are supported (as required by the situation) by specialists from every government organization, academia, think tanks, coalition/partners, and/or industry.

2.3.3 An Economic Strategy

Our national debt, the declining dollar, and the new trend towards using the euro as the global currency of choice are serious issues that can only be addressed through a National Economic Strategy, remembering that a sound economic strategy contributes to our national security.

At the current national debt, every man, woman, and child in the U.S. owes \$30,000.00 – and this debt is growing.⁸³ Our economy is the number one problem worrying Americans. The fear of losing their jobs and their standard of living is real. The next administration will have to address the economy and the trade-offs this involves. What should have the highest priority in spending – defense, homeland security, health, education, intelligence, diplomacy, aid for natural disasters? A National Economic Strategy would:



- **Look at this problem over the next century** to establish where we want our economy to be, then create a grand strategy that would lead to long-term economic stability and growth and world economic leadership. We need America’s best thinkers to work these complex problems so we have enough resources to fight terrorism and help build a stable world. It took decades to get to the current conditions, and it will take decades to correct them.
- **Develop a 10-year budget, or more.** Perhaps our U.S. budget should be a ten-year budget instead of a one-year budget to help drive our economic strategy into the future. A comprehensive National Economic Strategy that considers the economic impact of the myriad asymmetric threats can guide us through the issues successfully.
- **Re-direct U.S. agricultural know-how to the production of food supplies throughout the world** to help ensure adequate levels of food and nutrition for people at home and abroad. While the issue of declining food supplies faces the U.S., the population growth rates in the Third World are far larger than ours – some as high as 4 percent. This means that the export capacity of many of today’s food exporters is threatened, and those receiving such exports will suffer additional shortages, often with growing populations.
- **Develop a Comprehensive Strategy for Energy Independence.** In an increasingly global economy, a degree of energy interdependence is understood, perhaps even desirable. What cannot persist, however, is continued and increasing dependence on foreign energy resources to the point where our economic and security interests are threatened. Our strategy must be one of increasing our own resources through innovation, conservation, and exploration. A strategy to achieve realistic energy independence may be the single most important thing we can do to redress our strategic, environmental, and economic problems.⁸⁴

A new National Economic Strategy will require trade-offs and changes in priorities. Therefore, our policies must tread carefully through free and open market competition, protection and promotion of domestic commercial interests, and enhancement of global market economies that will aid emerging national economies.

⁸⁰ Pavitt, op. cit.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Zinni, op. cit.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Monblatt, op. cit.

2.3.4 A Diplomatic Strategy

The world has undergone and is undergoing enormous economic, demographic, and political change as a result of globalization.

National and regional cultural and religious influences have set the stage for a different global and regional diplomatic model. Several responses are worthy of further discussion in the upcoming symposia. Here are some of the ideas:

- **Reorganize U.S. government into joint regional organizations.** The joint organizations could be led by the Department of State (DoS), but would have leaders from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, Commerce, and other government organizations that could support the region, as well as universities, non-profits, and other coalition partners.
- **Organize U.S. ambassadors by region and topic** to implement diplomatic strategy at the regional and local level. The traditional model for diplomatic activities established the preeminence of the U.S. ambassador to a country – each has a direct line of authority to the President, not the Secretary of State. The DoS, through its Department of Administrative Services concept, is attempting to organize the ambassadors regionally and topically with a Deputy Assistant Secretary currently established for oil and one for Southern Europe. It is now the case that regular meetings in the region are held to coordinate policies and activities.



This is a good start but may be “too small” an action to build the right, responsive organization for the twenty-first century. Governmental agencies “carve” the world differently and regions do not overlap. This degrades coordination, integration and synchronization of missions and programs. There needs be a national alignment of regional responsibilities among U.S. governmental departments and agencies to fully develop this new National Diplomatic Strategy.

2.3.5 Additional Strategic Considerations

In addition to these sub-strategies, other sub-strategies for integration with the grand Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy would include developing regional and global:

- Health policy and programs;
- Education policy and programs;
- Emergency response policy and programs;
- Economic policy and programs (Paris Club: focus on in-debt countries, debt forgiveness⁸⁵);
- Resource sharing policy and programs; and
- Nation-building policy and programs.



U.S. Department of Defense

Regarding the last of these, the U.S. has had great success in nation-building. Consider the Marshall Plan, which helped to transition Europe to stable nation-states. It is also interesting to note that when the plan was first proposed, it only received 19 percent support from Americans. However, with highly effective leaders and a solid communication plan, our national leaders were able to sell the concept to the American people. Reflect on MacArthur in Japan and all that he did to restore that nation’s prominence.

This is the type of program and empowered leadership that we will need in the twenty-first century. The culture, religion, and ideals are very different in the nations that we hope to assist – but the goal remains the same: Build stable nation-states that will provide political, economic, social, and security institutions and ensure that their citizens have job security, food, clean water, freedom of religion, education, and hope for the future.

⁸⁵ Miller, op. cit.

3 The Way Forward

Starting with the rich dialogue begun at our May 8, 2008 Asymmetric Threat Symposium, and outlined in this paper, NDU and CACI desire to enlist government, industry, academia, and influential private citizens to join with us in shaping a vision and consensus for the future that will protect our nation, inspire our citizens, and guide national security professionals in this age of asymmetric threats.



Graphic by Stan Poczatek

The Asymmetric Threat Symposium focused on global diplomacy, strategic communications, securing the homeland, and global strategy to counterterrorism as integral components of the challenges we face, challenges that require “whole government” solutions. In future symposia, we will strive to broaden our understanding of these areas and begin to establish a framework of ideas on the future of national security that will inform leaders in the next administration, in Congress, and among those who will assist them in shaping the next national security agenda.

Three fundamental areas deserve our attention as targets for this project: the National Security Strategy of the U.S., our organization for national security, and a process to make the changes in policy and structure that our nation needs.

3.1 National Security Strategy

The U.S. Code requires the President to provide the Congress a National Security Strategy Report not later than 150 days after taking office, and thereafter annually with his submission of the budget. These reports are required to:

- Provide a comprehensive description of the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to national security;
- Describe the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and implement the strategy;
- Discuss the proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote interests and achieve worldwide goals and objectives that are vital to national security;
- Assess the adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the National Security Strategy, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of U.S. national power to support the implementation of the National Security Strategy; and
- Provide other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the security of the United States.⁸⁶

These requirements, instituted as a part of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Goldwater-Nichols), have led to a more formal preparation of a national security strategy.

President Reagan’s National Security Strategy Report in 1987 was the first that provided a four-point strategy. His goal was to restore our nation’s military strength after a period of decline, restore our nation’s economic strength and reinvigorate the world economic system, restore the nation’s international prestige as a world leader, and restore pride in all Americans and carry our message to the world that individuals and not governments should control their economic, spiritual, and political destinies.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ U.S. Code, Title 50 Chapter 15, Subchapter 1, § 404a, Annual National Security Strategy Report, Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institute, available at <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode>.

⁸⁷ “National Security Strategy of the United States – Ronald Reagan’s Report to Congress – Transcript,” U.S. Department of State Bulletin, April 1988.

President Clinton's most influential report was the 1995 Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement that sought to seize the opportunities from the end of the Cold War to make our nation safer and more prosperous, to grow opportunities for American jobs and investment, and to grow the community of democratic nations and thereby enhance the prospects for political stability and peaceful conflict resolution.⁸⁸

The post-9/11 strategy of 2002 contained the controversial doctrine of preemptive war and rejected the strategy of containment as unworkable against the current national security threat. The change in the threat from the end of the Cold War to our current asymmetric environment and a progression of changing strategies are as much tied to the approaches of presidential administrations as they are to the security environment. With the advent of a new presidential administration, and the perceived desire for greater consensus within both the political and security communities, the opportunity exists to suggest the framework of a new strategy that will best meet our nation's current and future requirements.

Defining our threats is difficult. Crafting an effective consensus in strategic thought will be far more difficult. Our next symposium will look into what such a strategy ought to contain. We will discuss not just the objectives and goals of the strategy, but also the means.

What resources are available and where should resources be found to achieve a whole-government approach to national security? Equally important, what are our limits? As Americans, we like to believe in a future of unlimited opportunities. We see ourselves as being able to overcome any obstacle. Yet in the current war against terrorism, our volunteer professional armed forces have been strained. Change may be required in the distribution of security resources to other agencies of government as well as in the distribution of resources among the Services, and the direction of resources within them.

3.2 National Security Structure

Our current National Security Structure is built on a foundation that was instituted to deal with the requirements of a Cold War world and a hostile Soviet threat. It was a landmark change in 1947 that established a Defense Department with a separate Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council.

However, over the past 60 years there has been as much growth in the bureaucracy of security as there has been in modifications to modernize the structure. Then why do we need a change in this structure for national security?

We frequently speak of "whole government" security solutions, but some elements of our government are not full partners in the process. One example is in economics. Every National Security Strategy from Presidents Reagan to Bush has stressed the importance of "extending prosperity through free and fair trade and wise developmental policies."⁸⁹ Yet the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy is not a statutory, but an invited member of the National Security Council.

To better implement a new strategy, changes in our security apparatus are clearly needed. Some have suggested a Goldwater-Nichols-style change to the interagency process and changes that would create more parallel and cohesive organizational design, geography, and manning. This may be the optimum time to modernize and streamline our security structures. Our next symposium will be charged to look at the way we are organized for security.

3.3 Process to Reform

Finally, it will be necessary for the U.S. to determine how it can realistically move from the current strategy and structure to a future model. The process of change may be the most difficult part.

Each element in our current structure has a constituency. Many are highly effective. Others are not but still hold significant political power. One need only look at the controversy surrounding the creation of a Director for National Intelligence to realize the difficulty in instituting major changes in our security structures. Major changes will need leadership and consensus. They will also require a peculiar sensitivity to the potential for disruption of ongoing security measures.

88 "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," The White House, February 1995, Preface.

89 "National Security Strategy of the United States," The White House, March 2006, Preface.

Goldwater-Nichols, the most frequently cited example of that kind of consensus, required a unique circumstance, unique leaders, and a unique and talented staff working out the details and identifying challenges and obstacles. For our study to be complete, it must take a deep look at a realistic process that has a high potential for success.

4 Conclusion

Facing unique new asymmetric threats from twenty-first century adversaries, the United States must do everything in its power to build a lasting, unified, and comprehensive strategy for dealing with asymmetric threats now and for the future.

According to Defense Secretary Gates, “We can expect that asymmetric warfare will be the mainstay of the contemporary battlefield for some time. These conflicts will be fundamentally political in nature and require the application of all elements of national power. Success will be less a matter of imposing one’s will and more a function of shaping behavior of friends, adversaries and, most importantly, the people in between.”⁹⁰

These concepts, and those generated in the speeches and panels of the first Asymmetric Threat Symposium, offer important ideas and context for the next administration, Congress, and other key leaders to begin to develop a new, decades-long approach to national security. The new asymmetric threat response paradigm should reflect current and future threats to U.S. security, review our current and potential weaknesses moving forward, and discover opportunities to succeed against myriad asymmetric threats.

In the coming months, NDU and CACI will co-host two additional Asymmetric Threat Symposia to continue the dialogue between government, industry, academia, and other thought leaders and begin to develop a more robust framework for the Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy. Key topics will include the evolution of soft and hard power, shifts in global behavior, competition for declining resources, and other emergent threats. We hope to inform and contribute to productive sessions that will help our nation reach agreement on a new national security paradigm, one that will reflect the increasingly asymmetric nature of future threats to U.S. security, recognize our nation’s current and potential weaknesses, and identify opportunities to achieve a more secure future for the American people and the world.

⁹⁰ Thom Shanker, “Defense Secretary Urges More Spending for U.S. Diplomacy,” *New York Times*, November 27, 2007.

Appendix A: Framing Today's Asymmetric Threat

There is a consensus that asymmetric threats, including acts of terrorism, will be a prominent feature of the threat environment that the United States and our allies will face for at least the next several decades.

At its most basic level, asymmetric warfare refers to conflict between two or more actors – nations, coalitions, or groups – whose relative military power differs significantly. Contemporary military thinkers broaden this definition to include asymmetry of strategy or tactics. Therefore, the terms “asymmetric warfare” and “asymmetric threat” describe conflicts and/or threats where the capabilities of two adversaries differ markedly at their core.⁹¹

Today, the U.S. is threatened by a host of asymmetric state and non-state threats to our national security and national will (e.g., Islamist extremism, global terrorism, insurgents and guerilla fighters, and failed and failing states). It is imperative for national security planners, military strategists, doctrinal experts, and scholars to join together around a common set of terms, concepts, strategies, operational methods, and tactics to combat these threats and deter or defeat them.

The Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO), recently stated that “the committee has a responsibility to help ensure that our fighting force is ready not only for today’s fights, but also for unexpected conflicts they may face in the future.”⁹² Following America’s resounding success in the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990s, our adversaries learned from Iraq’s mistake in trying to match us conventionally and instead are seeking new ways to turn our strengths against us asymmetrically – with attacks that are more dynamic and lethal, marked by greater intensity, operational tempo, uncertainty, and psychological impact.⁹³

Asymmetric threats are, by their nature, long-term ... They require us to operate with unity, agility, and creativity, and will require devoting considerably more resources to non-military instruments of national power.

In January 2008, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates framed the asymmetric threat as follows:

“For years to come, we will deal with a new, far more malignant form of global terrorism rooted in extremist and violent jihadism, new manifestations of ethnic, tribal, and sectarian conflict, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed and failing states, states enriched with oil profits and discontented with their place in the international system, authoritarian regimes facing increasingly restive populations that seek political freedom as well as a better standard of living, and, finally, we see both emergent and resurgent great powers whose future paths remain unclear.

“These challenges have two things in common. First, they are, by their nature, long-term, requiring patience over years and across multiple presidencies. Second, they cannot be overcome by military means alone, and they extend well beyond the traditional domain of any single government agency or department. They require our government to operate with unity, agility, and creativity, and will require devoting considerably more resources to non-military instruments of national power.”⁹⁴

Because the challenge goes beyond the capacity and expertise of any one department of the U.S. government, an integrated national strategy to defeat these threats must involve multiple defense, economic, diplomatic, security, communications, law enforcement, commercial, and intelligence agencies as well as the non-governmental community of for-profit and non-profit organizations, academics, researchers, and media experts. Secretary Gates furthers this notion by suggesting that military success alone is insufficient. Our military efforts must be coupled with “soft power” capabilities – economic development, institution-building, promoting internal reconciliation, public services, training and equipping indigenous security forces, effective and strategic communications, and more – to establish long-term success against today’s asymmetric threat.⁹⁵

91 Russell Watson and John Barry, “Tomorrow’s New Face Of Battle; The Day Is Not Far Off When The Computer Chip And The Robot Will Be Mobilized As The Military’s Shock Troops,” *Newsweek*, December 2, 1997.

92 Megan Scully, “Pentagon Policy Bill Touts Readiness, But Defers Tough Weapons Decisions,” *NationalJournal.com*, May 19, 2008.

93 Ike Skelton, “America’s Frontier Wars: Lessons for Asymmetric Conflicts,” *Military Review*, September – October 2001.

94 Robert M. Gates, Pre Alfalfa Luncheon Speech at CSIS, January 2008. Transcript by Federal News Service Washington, D.C.

95 Ibid.

Appendix B: Describing Evolving Asymmetric Threats

Figure B-1 summarizes how the asymmetric threat environment of the twentieth century has evolved into the twenty-first century. While we can learn from the mistakes and successes of our past, the United States must now look to developing an Integrated National Asymmetric Threat strategy that addresses these new global threats to our security.

20 th Century	vs	21 st Century
The Good War – WWII	vs	The Longest War – Iraq
MAD Strategy	vs	Undefined Strategy
War/Military	vs	Conflict/Non-Military
Nation-State Wars	vs	Cell Conflicts
Generals'/Admirals' Wars	vs	Sergeants' Wars
Combat Power	vs	Influence the Population
DoD Superior Technology	vs	Will, Time, Determination
Think Order of Battle	vs	Think in Terms of Enemy's Culture/Ideals
Maneuver Space (Battlefield)	vs	Population/Urban Space (More People in Cities)
Military Victory, Rebuild	vs	Hearts & Minds Victory, Nation-Building
Sequential Process (In Phases)	vs	Parallel Processes (All Phases at Once)
Physical Defeat/Victory	vs	Ideological Defeat/New Ideals
Regulated Warfare	vs	Unregulated Warfare
Unconditional Surrender	vs	Negotiated Peace (Limited Objectives)
One Moral High Ground	vs	Multiple Moral High Grounds
War of Military Might	vs	War of Ideas
Courage, Commitment, Rejection	vs	Fear, Apathy, Support
Ex-Urban Scattered Population	vs	Urban Clustering & Megacities

Figure B-1: Evolution of the Asymmetrical Threat Environment: Twentieth to Twenty-First Century

An Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy to address the global threats must take into account twenty-first century changes in our environment and be the foundation for a grand asymmetric threat strategy. The following are descriptions of asymmetric threats, rather than definitions, provided to help readers new to the asymmetric threat discussions. It is critically important for the U.S. to define the asymmetric threat so that there is a common terminology used when developing a grand strategy to counter it. The following points highlight several key issues in the asymmetric threat environment.

- **Terrorism** is “the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion.”⁹⁶ There is no internationally agreed upon legal definition.^{97,98} In one modern definition of terrorism, it is violence against civilians to achieve political or ideological

96 Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/terrorism>.

97 Angus Martyn, “The Right of Self-Defence under International Law – the Response to the Terrorist Attacks of 11 September,” Australian Law and Bills Digest Group, Parliament of Australia website, February 12, 2002.

98 Thalif Deen. “POLITICS: U.N. Member States Struggle to Define Terrorism,” Inter Press Service, July 25, 2005.

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objectives by creating fear.⁹⁹ Most common definitions of terrorism include only those acts that are intended to create fear (e.g., terror), are perpetrated for an ideological goal (as opposed to a lone attack), and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants. Some definitions also include acts of unlawful violence and war.

Terrorism is also a form of unconventional warfare and psychological warfare. The word is politically and emotionally charged, which greatly compounds the difficulty of providing a precise definition.¹⁰⁰ Terrorism has been used by a broad array of political organizations to further their objectives, including right- and left-wing political parties, nationalistic and religious groups, revolutionaries, and ruling governments.¹⁰¹ The presence of non-state actors in widespread armed conflict has created controversy regarding the application of the laws of war.

- **Transnational Terrorism** – Today, the principal terrorist enemy confronting the U.S. is a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals – and their state and non-state supporters – which have in common the exploitation of Islam and the use of terrorism for ideological ends. This transnational movement is not monolithic. Although Al Qaida functions as the movement’s vanguard and remains, along with its affiliate groups and those inspired by them, the most dangerous present manifestation of the enemy, the movement is not controlled by any single individual, group, or state. What unites the movement is a common vision, a common set of ideas about the nature and destiny of the world, and a common goal of ushering in totalitarian rule. What further unites the movement is the ideology of oppression, violence, and hate.
- In addition to this principal enemy, a host of **other groups and individuals** use terror and violence against innocent civilians to pursue their political objectives. Though their motives and goals may be different, and often include more secular and narrower territorial aims, they threaten our interests and those of our partners as they attempt to overthrow civil order and replace freedom with conflict and intolerance. Their terrorist tactics ensure that they are enemies of humanity regardless of their goals and no matter where they operate.

For our terrorist enemies, violence is not only justified, it is necessary and even glorified – judged as the only means to achieve a world vision darkened by hate, fear, and oppression. They use suicide bombings, beheadings, and other atrocities against innocent people as a means to promote their creed. Our enemies’ demonstrated indifference to human life and desire to inflict catastrophic damage on the U.S. and our friends and allies around the world has fueled their desire to obtain weapons of mass destruction. The White House has made it clear that we cannot allow the most dangerous terrorists and their regime sponsors to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.

- **Narco-Terrorism** – Terrorism fueled by the sale of illegal narcotics appeared long ago in our Western hemisphere. In the 1980s, Colombian cartels and insurgent groups began attacking their government using billions of dollars in cocaine money. Initially, insurgent groups rented their forces to drug cartels for protection and logistics. Later, they went into the drug business themselves. With access to billions of dollars in drug profits, narco-terrorists often arm their fighters with equipment that is better than the local government’s or even the U.S. military’s.¹⁰²
- **Nation-State Aggression** – Political science uses the term “nation-state” for most existing sovereign states, even if their political boundaries do not coincide with ethnic boundaries. In some cases, the geographic boundaries of an ethnic population and a political state largely coincide. In these cases, there is little immigration or emigration, few members of ethnic minorities, and few members of the “home” ethnicity living in other countries. Along the axis of aggression, many (but not all) of the most repressive nation-states in the world also rate high. If nation-states possess weapons of mass destruction, or seek to attain them, they threaten world order and are by definition aggressive. Sponsors of terrorism are obviously aggressive. Lower on the same scale are nation-states that attack or threaten their neighbors militarily. Then there are nation-states that traffic in narcotics, launder illicit funds, ship small arms illegally, interfere with the free trade of their neighbors, or otherwise behave aggressively in their sub-regions. Those nation-states, even without the taint of terror or weapons of mass destruction, may destabilize or poison their regional political or economic environments.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Adrian Humphreys, “One official’s ‘refugee’ is another’s ‘terrorist,’ ” *National Post*, 2006-01-17, p. 1. “The divergent assessments of the same evidence on such an important issue shocks a leading terrorism researcher. ‘The notion of terrorism is fairly straightforward – it is ideologically or politically motivated violence directed against civilian targets,’ said Professor Martin Rudner, director of the Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies at Ottawa’s Carleton University.”

¹⁰⁰ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (Columbia University Press, 1998). Page 32. See review in *The New York Times* Inside Terrorism.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Jeffrey Record, “Bounding the Global War on Terrorism” (PDF).

¹⁰² Mark Kirk, “A New Defense Issue: Middle Eastern Narcoterrorism,” *Roll Call*, November 30, 2006.

¹⁰³ “Identifying Rogue States: Issues of Policy and Action,” World Peace Foundation, <http://www.worldpeacefoundation.org>

- **Cyberterrorism** is the convergence of terrorism and cyberspace. It is generally understood to mean unlawful attacks and threats of attack against computers, networks, and the information stored therein when done to intimidate or coerce a government or its people to further political or social objectives. Moreover, to qualify as cyberterrorism, an attack should result in violence against persons or property, or at least cause enough harm to generate fear. Attacks that lead to death or bodily injury, explosions, plane crashes, water and food contamination, or severe economic loss are examples. Serious attacks against critical infrastructures can be acts of cyberterrorism depending on their impact. Attacks that disrupt nonessential services or that are mainly a costly nuisance are not.¹⁰⁴
- **Nuclear Terrorism** denotes the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear or radiological weapons in acts of terrorism, including attacks against facilities where radioactive materials are present. In legal terms, nuclear terrorism is an offense committed if a person unlawfully and intentionally “uses in any way radioactive material … with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury,” according to international conventions. The notion of terrorist organizations using nuclear weapons (especially very small ones, such as “suitcase” nukes) has been an ongoing theme in American rhetoric and culture.
- **Bioterrorism** – According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a bioterrorism attack is the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or other germs (agents) used to cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants. These agents are typically found in nature, but it is possible that they can be changed to increase their ability to cause disease, be resistant to current medicines, or spread into the environment. Biological agents can be spread through the air, through water, or in food. Terrorists may use biological agents because they can be extremely difficult to detect and do not cause illness for several hours to several days. Some bioterrorism agents, like the smallpox virus, can be spread from person to person, and some, like anthrax, cannot.
- **Pandemic Disease (natural or man-made)** – According to the World Health Organization, a pandemic can start when three conditions have been met: (1) a new disease emerges among the population; (2) the agent infects humans, causing serious illness, and (3) the agent spreads easily and sustainably among humans. A disease or condition is not a pandemic merely because it is widespread or kills many people; it must also be infectious. For example, cancer is responsible for many deaths but is not considered a pandemic because the disease is not infectious or contagious (although certain causes of some types of cancer might be).
- **Resource Wars (Food, Water, Energy, Medicine, Jobs)** – Large populations driven by consumerism and tempered by scarce supply of raw materials and the global climate change and dwindling natural resources are combining to increase the likelihood of violent conflict over land, water, and energy. Climate change “will make scarce resources, clean water, viable agricultural land even scarcer” – and this will “make the emergence of violent conflict more rather than less likely.”¹⁰⁵ These scarcities may lead future historians to classify the twenty-first century as the Age of the Resource Wars. Some are obvious and are actual “hot” wars; others are not so obvious and are causing international tension and conflicts.
- **Global Natural Disasters** – A natural disaster is the consequence of a natural hazard (e.g., volcanic eruption, earthquake, or landslide) that affects human activities. Human vulnerability, exacerbated by the lack of planning or lack of appropriate emergency management, leads to financial, environmental, or human losses. The resulting loss depends on the capacity of the population to support or resist the disaster, their resilience. Global disasters affect so many people that a global response is required to bring stability to the region.
- **The Slowing U.S. Economy, Devaluation of the Dollar, and Huge Debt** can directly influence the strategies developed and the resources that would effectively counter the twenty-first century threats.
- The current **Global Esteem for the U.S.** is low, so the twenty-first century strategy must address the need to rebuild our reputation and build partnerships to address the common threats.

All of these threats are candidates for consideration in arriving at a common definition of the global asymmetric threat to our homeland's security. Only then can an effective Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy be developed.

¹⁰⁴ Dorothy E. Denning, “Cyberterrorism,” Testimony before the Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism; Committee on Armed Services; U.S. House of Representatives, Georgetown University; May 23, 2000.

¹⁰⁵ British Defense Secretary John Reid quoted by Michael Klare, “The Coming Resource Wars,” http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Oil_watch/ComingResourceWars.html.

Appendix C: Examining the Four Primary Sub-Strategies

The new Integrated National Asymmetric Threat Strategy must be broad enough to guide the development of long-term integrated tactical strategies. This new grand strategy must include four sub-strategies that cover the wide array of current and future non-traditional threats to U.S. and global security. These sub-strategies include Strategic Communications, Defense and Homeland Security, the Economy, and Global Diplomacy.

The following sections further examine each of the sub-strategies and offer some guidelines and ideas for members of the U.S. government, industry, and academia who will participate in the development of the grand asymmetric threat strategy.

A Strategic Communications Strategy

A National Strategic Communications Strategy must respond to the requirements and aspirations of the global, national, state, and local communities. We must also remember that the world is wired for 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, and 365-days-a-year coverage. In today's environment, any event can and will be recorded and broadcast around the world within a matter of seconds.

We will know when our national communication program is a success when the average U.S. citizen understands and believes the message, the average world citizen understands and believes the message, the targeted enemy audience hears the message and changes its beliefs, and/or the targeted enemies do not change their beliefs – but they are isolated from the rest of the world.

The following guidelines are critical to the development of an effective strategic communication plan:

- Know yourself, the enemy, and your audience, and do not confuse any of the three.
- Know your ideals – those ideas that are so important you are willing to die to protect.
- Know your enemy's ideals; know who are the zealots, the moderates, and the agnostics.
- Your audience must be the people who are capable of “thinking.” The non-thinkers will follow whatever the thinkers say. Identify the thinkers and plan for communications to reach them.
- Communicate your message to all American citizens in order to develop a national will, a common belief system, a common understanding of our principles and values, and a common vision of what freedom means.
- Communicate your strategic message around the world – translated into native languages – and communicate based on an understanding of the target audience’s culture and ideology. For example:
 - Translate capstone democratic works into Arabic/Farsi;¹⁰⁶
 - Provide libraries of translated books on science, philosophy, biographies;¹⁰⁷ and
 - Engage moderate Muslims to design the communication plan.¹⁰⁸
- Industry, academia, and government must work together to implement change.¹⁰⁹

Think BIG:

Grand (100-year) Strategy to guide the development of 20-year integrated tactical strategies.

10-year U.S. budget process.

One U.S. government Strategic Planning Process that leads to an integrated national plan.

Think BIG:

A standard TV cable network station dedicated to U.S. information (threats, accomplishments, education, etc.).

The Great Books series – translated into many languages and available for free download from the Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁶ Monblatt, op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Calland, op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Zinni, op. cit.

A Defense and Homeland Security Strategy

A new Defense and Homeland Security Strategy must address all potential asymmetric threats, from terrorists and Islamist extremists to pandemic disease and natural disasters at a global, national, state, and local level. Guidelines for the development of such a comprehensive strategy include the following:

- The Islamist extremist threat is sustained by multiple sources around the world. Our Defense and Homeland Security Strategy must address elimination of the terrorist training and support bases around the globe, elimination of their source of recruits and funding to support their sustainment and operations, identification of their leadership, and destruction of their command and control structure. Other ideas to counter the Islamist extremist threat include:
 - **Governance** – Expand the focus from elections and human rights to emphasizing the rule of law, justice, and anti-corruption efforts. Facilitate networking between local organizations and international groups, such as Transparency International and the International Bar Association, to provide practical support for reform.¹¹⁰
 - **Civil Society** – Utilize relationships with local organizations to foster cross-cultural communications and understanding. For example, remember that dignity and social cohesion are paramount virtues in traditional Middle Eastern societies, not electoral democracy as we practice it.¹¹¹
 - **Economic and Social Development** – There are key lessons to be learned from international development initiatives, particularly at the local level. One of the best examples is Grameen Bank, a microfinance organization and community development bank started in Bangladesh in 1976. Grameen Bank makes small loans to the poor without requiring collateral and encourages borrowers to adopt positive social habits, such as keeping children in school. Furthermore, 97 percent of Grameen's borrowers are women. In addition to raising the status of poor women through ownership of assets, Grameen's microlending practices do not conflict with traditional Islamic values. In recognition, Grameen's founder, Mohamed Yunus, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. Also notable: Khadija – the wife of Islam's founder Mohammed – was a merchant.
 - **Education** – Access to quality education is a long-standing issue in developing countries. Oftentimes, religious institutions fill the educational gap. It has been suggested that Western nations provide books and other materials (translated into local languages) that not only cover subjects like science, but also introduce and discuss democratic principles.
 - **Treat the victims of terrorism** as our natural allies, provide them with dignity and compassion, and empower them to tell their stories, without exploiting them. The U.S., Colombia, Northern Ireland, and Spain all have active victims of terrorism associations.¹¹² We should encourage them to establish links and network with victims in other countries to better publicize them, personalize the victims, help them organize and network, enlist them in campaigns to persuade vulnerable youths to shun terrorist recruitment, and involve them in de-programming if they are willing. We must find ways to give them a voice – at the UN, regional conferences, and in the media. Imagine the impact of a demonstration by survivors of terrorist attacks vs. glamorizing suicide bombers and violence.¹¹³ Use Muslim sources on influence and investment funds.¹¹⁴
 - **Reasoning from the Koran** – Mohammed Iqbal, the intellectual father of Pakistan, called for reviving *Ijtihad* – reasoning from the Koran and sayings of the Prophet, not just from Sharia. This idea remains in currency among many Muslim intellectuals. Benazir Bhutto cited contemporary Pakistani, Indonesian, Iranian, and Algerian writers. Some Muslim intellectuals today, such as Rashid Ridha, advocate reopening the doctrine of abrogation – *naskh* – and applying it to “Verses of the Sword.” Mainstream Muslim acceptance of this abstruse theological point could dramatically undercut support for violent fundamentalists and reduce their credibility.¹¹⁵

Think BIG:

Plan to rebuild the nation on the first day of major intervention.

Employ the concept of stabilization missions with military operations as a subordinate element and not vice versa.

¹¹⁰ Monblatt, op. cit.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Cochran, op. cit.

¹¹³ Rodriguez, op. cit.

¹¹⁴ Miller, op. cit.

¹¹⁵ Monblatt, op. cit.

Dealing With Today's Asymmetric Threat to U.S. and Global Security

- ◆ Find ways to make their writings freely available throughout the Muslim world. The key is to use Muslim sources and reasoning to counter the arguments of the extremists, few of whom are well-schooled in Islamic theology.
- ◆ Use Women of the Ummah and other women's groups – help them network, don't co-opt them, but work through private groups to offer training in organizing, setting up coops, communicating, networking. Make them a key channel for funneling microlending funds, school reform, etc.
- ◆ Use Muslim investment funds – *Zakat*, charity, is a pillar of Islam. Empower those who emphasize the communal responsibility for development (sovereign wealth funds), and challenge them to help the people of Darfur as an example. Attack Islamist credibility by using their words and ideas against them. For example:
 - *Kitman* – Mental reservation, partial truth;
 - *Taqiyya* – Dissembling; and
 - Publicize the stated goals of Al Qaida, etc., and impartial reports of what the Taliban did in Afghanistan.

An Economic Strategy

A new National Economic Strategy must consider each of the potential asymmetric threats to our security and include plans to provide domestic and foreign aid, as necessary. For example, consider just one small aspect of our economic model – land use vs. the population growth. The facts are as follows:

- At the present growth rate of 1.1 percent per year, the U.S. population will double to more than **half a billion people** within the next 60 years. It is estimated that approximately one acre of land is lost due to urbanization and highway construction alone for every person added to the U.S. population. This means that only 0.6 acres of farmland will be available to grow food for each American in 2050, as opposed to the 1.8 acres per capita available today. At least **1.2 acres** per person is required in order to maintain current American dietary standards. Food prices are projected to increase three-to-five-fold within this period.
- If present population growth, domestic food consumption, and topsoil loss trends continue, the U.S. will most likely cease to be a food exporter by approximately **2025** because food grown in the U.S. will be needed for domestic purposes. Since food exports earn **\$40 billion** for the U.S. annually, the loss of this income source would result in an even greater increase in America's trade deficit.
- Considering that America is the **world's largest food exporter**, the future survival of millions of people around the world may also come into question if food exports from the U.S. were to cease.¹¹⁶ Consider also the impact on political stability of countries that now rely on U.S. exports to feed their population.

While this issue faces the U.S. directly, the population growth rates in the Third World are far larger than ours – some as high as 4 percent. This means that the export capacity of many of today's exporters of food is threatened as they turn inward to feed their own populations. U.S. agricultural know-how must be redirected to the production of food supplies throughout the world. The National Economic Strategy must consider this and other issues to ensure long-term, global economic security.

Think BIG:

Implement a new budget process.

Develop a 10-year plan with 4-year execution

¹¹⁶ David Pimentel and Mario Giampietro, "Food, Land, Population and the U.S. Economy," Cornell University Istituto of Nazionale della Nutrizione, Rome Executive Summary, November 21, 1994.

A Diplomatic Strategy

A new National Diplomatic Strategy should be organized regionally, with U.S. ambassadors and other officials working closely with local and regional officials worldwide and implementing diplomatic programs that benefit the U.S. and our global neighbors. This new strategy based on regional organizations must take into account the following:

- Most issues generated by current conflicts around the world are regional and are linked globally in many ways, such as through the Internet, economic dependencies, and human migrations. New joint regional organizations must have the technology to communicate securely around the world.
- The Department of State (DoS) lead must have the responsibility and authority to direct the joint organization. “Bureau Chiefs” must have executive command authority and responsibility and must be able to respond in near real-time to the conflicts in their region. They should be professional diplomats with extensive regional experience – selected for their expertise and leadership capabilities – and not appointed for political reasons.
- Currently, another organizational model is being established to harness the U.S. capabilities – similar in some ways to what is described above. DoD and DoS, along with the Inter-Agency, are coordinating closely to develop an Africa Command (USAFRICOM) which will be a unified command as of October 1, 2008. The command will be organized differently from other unified commands throughout the world and will be staffed by members of DoD, DoS, and select other Departments of the Inter-Agency. Such manning requires an increase in size of DoS and Department staffs as well as training. This is again a bold step – and needed for today – but will it be sufficient for tomorrow’s asymmetric threat?
- Through its embassy structure and human resource development, DoS must develop an “operational” capability. Other Departments of the Inter-Agency must also develop an operational capability to support these joint missions around the globe. The joint teams should train together. We must prepare our teams to establish and execute operational programs such as required in fragile, failing, and/or failed states.

Think BIG:

Re-organize U.S. diplomatic agencies by region and empower regional “Bureau Chiefs” with real authority.

Integrate regional programs and synchronize global diplomatic efforts.

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